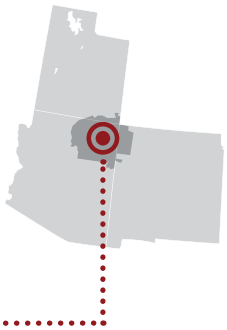
Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs
Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development (IEED)
DIVISION OF CAPITAL INVESTMENT

LOAN GUARANTEE PROGRAM
SUCCESS STORY

Navajo Tribal Utility Authority



Navajo Nation

Project Description: In 2016 the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority (NTUA) utilized the Indian Loan Guarantee Program to guarantee a loan that allowed NTUA to acquire a greater ownership interest in NTUA Wireless, LLC (NTUAW), a subsidiary of the tribal utility that provides telecommunications services for the Navajo Nation.

The $23.5 million dollar guaranteed loan granted NTUA a 51 percent common stock interest in NTUAW, making NTUA the first and only wireless/internet business primarily owned and operated by a tribal enterprise. NTUA gained more ownership authority that opens opportunities to economic expansion and employment in the communications sector.

The creation of NTUA Wireless met an underserved and unserved communications need within the Navajo Nation. The jobs created and the ability of a greater number of Navajo homes to have access to the communications products, especially the internet, has been the greatest highlight.

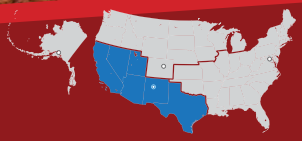
NTUA is organized to provide the Navajo people with services at low and reasonable costs. These services include communications, electricity, natural gas, water, wastewater, and photovoltaic power (solar). NTUA also promotes employment opportunities while improving the health and welfare of Navajo Nation residents.

The tribal utility overcame several barriers building the infrastructure in the Navajo Nation. Numerous right-of-ways had to be obtained to ensure that the project remained on schedule.

"NTUA continues to seek ways to expand into isolated Navajo Nation areas with very limited communication service," said NTUA General Manager Walter Haase. "This is especially important for families needing immediate access to emergency services or families needing to communicate with family members living away from home."

Over 80 permanent fulltime jobs were created, wherein 45 direct jobs within NTUA Wireless and an additional 35 jobs within NTUA to support the efforts of NTUA Wireless. "This venture demonstrates Navajo sovereignty," said Haase. "It elevates Navajo ownership in the wireless business-whereby our voice will guide NTUAW to the next level. Any expansion opens economic venues, including increased employment. We are in an area where the unemployment rate is close to 46.5% - therefore any new jobs helps."

TYPE OF SERVICE:	LOAN GUARANTEE
LENDER:	GREAT WESTERN BANK
LOCATION:	NAVAJO NATION
FINANCING AMOUNT:	$23.5 MILLION
PROJECT:	TELECOMMUNICATIONS



SOUTHWEST ZONE

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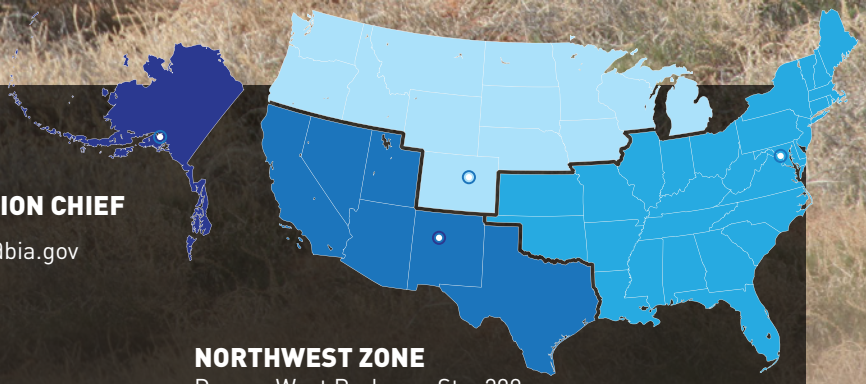

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